

Bedford men must battle again

By STEVE CURRY
Wycombe 1 Bedford 1
F.A. Cup first round
second replay
(Third replay—Bedford on
Thursday)

★ NON - LEAGUE
Wycombe and Bedford, after 300 minutes of F.A. Cup football, are still dead locked.

They go into a third first round replay at Bedford on Thursday.

When the 90 minutes of this second replay at Loakes Park ended last night, referee Arthur Dimond, of Harlow, began extra time, then immediately abandoned the match.

Officials of the two clubs wrangled for half an hour over where the next encounter must take place.

Finally Wycombe secretary Bill Hayter announced: "It's at Bedford."

Referee Dimond, covered in mud, said: "I could not let the match go on. The conditions were impossible. I couldn't even see the marking on the pitch."

Technically, as the match was abandoned, it should be replayed at Wycombe.

Farcical

But Ron Burgess, manager of Southern League Bedford, said: "But the replay could not have been held here. That pitch will not be fit in two weeks let alone two days."

The match, before an 8,000 crowd, was played in farcical conditions. Mist and driving rain enveloped the ground of the Isthmian League amateurs. The pitch, as the match went on, grew steadily worse and the exhausted players had difficulty in moving the ball through the clinging mud.

The teams were as evenly matched as the five hours football indicates, and another stalemate always looked likely. But the crowd found it thrilling football despite the mistakes caused by conditions.

It was a night for long-range shooting and both sides fired shots at the opposing goal from all angles and distances. Bedford's part-time professionals opened the score in the 25th minute with the type of fluke goal which could easily decide who plays Oxford United in the second round.

Hit post

DANNY PATON, Bedford inside forward, beat four men and his shot hit an upright to rebound off Wycombe keeper John Maskell into the net.

Seven minutes later Wycombe levelled with bearded KEITH SAMUELS heading home a Les Merrick corner.

Bedford missed a great chance of winning when a miskick by John Beck let in Chris Riley, but he shot straight at Maskell.

Wycombe, too, let slip a winning chance.

Samuels chased in to meet a centre from Paul Bates—but headed straight at Bedford keeper Alan Collier.

Bedford and Wycombe meet again after rain wrecks second replay

CUP CLASH HALTED IN EXTRA TIME

By NIGEL CLARKE

Wycombe W 1, Bedford 1 (abandoned in extra time)

THE rain that lashed little Loakes Park last night was the only winner in this F.A. Cup first round second replay.

After 300 minutes of fierce football Isthmian League amateurs Wycombe and Southern League Bedford are still level.

For with the first kick of extra time Harlow referee Arthur Dimond abandoned the match because the pitch was almost waterlogged.

"It was unfair to go on," said Dimond. "Both sides were nearly out on their feet and in the water and mud it would not have been just for one team to have won by a fluke."

The clubs will meet in a third replay at Bedford on Thursday. It should have been at Loakes Park again but Bedford manager Ron Burgess said: "Ridiculous, this pitch won't recover for at least another two weeks."

Long before the finish last night the pitch was a muddy morass, ankle deep in water. But to their credit both teams battled bravely in the conditions.

There was little good football. Instead, tremendous excitement.

Tackling became more luck than judgment and shots hit powerfully from twenty yards barely reached the goalkeepers.

Bedford, famous for their Cup campaigning, should have settled it without the game going to extra time.

They bombarded Wycombe, and twice Chris Riley squandered good chances.

Heading

Wycombe had their chances, too. Roared on by a crowd of nearly 10,000 they played to the heading ability of inside right Keith Samuels.

Goalkeeper Alan Collier just got to one Samuels header.

Bedford had opened brightly and Danny Paton put them ahead after twenty-five minutes after beating four men.

Wycombe equalised seven minutes later when Les Merrick lifted a corner kick on to Samuels's head and it was a goal before Bedford could move.